

Camp Fire Safety

What you should know about fire safety while camping.

Roasting marshmallows and singing songs by an open fire are favorite camping activities. Camping should be a safe and fun experience for everyone. To prevent burn injuries or damage to wildland areas, please take the following precautions:

1

Before You Leave Home -- Before leaving for your camping trip, check with authorities at your camping location for outdoor burning restrictions. During especially dry seasons even recreational and cooking fires can be restricted. Check the weather forecast before you leave. Ask if there is wood available or if you should bring your own. Also bring supplies to start your fire, do not use flammable liquids. During dry weather conditions, consider an alternative to a camp fire.

- Keep first aid supplies and emergency telephone numbers accessible at all times.
- Know where the nearest telephone or ranger station is located, and carry a cell phone if possible.

2

Are children included in your group – Before you start a camp fire, talk with your kids about safety around camp fires.

- Supervision is paramount in keeping children safe. Ensure the close supervision of children whenever a campfire or hot coals are burning.
- Set a safety zone around the camp fire where all can sit and relax around the fire. Designate a play area to keep bikes and other toys out of the safety zone.
- Set family boundaries, only those designated should light the campfire, add wood or put out the fire.
- Be sure all matches and lighters are out of reach and sight of children. Matches and lighters should be stored in a secured location to prohibit access by children.
- Teach children to Stop, Drop and Roll if their clothes catch on fire.

3

Preparing your camp fire site:

- Avoid areas with overhanging branches, steep slopes or dry grasses.
- Clear area of all debris down to bare soil.
- Construct a fire ring from rocks, keep the ring under four feet in diameter with a ten foot clearance around the perimeter.
- Have a bucket of water, and shovel nearby to put out the fire when finished. Never leave a fire unattended.
- Burn only natural vegetation such as purchased cut wood. Be prepared to pack your garbage, trash burning is not allowed in Washington State.
- Never use matches or lighters inside tents. Never burn charcoal, or use portable camping heaters, lanterns or stoves inside tents, campers or vehicles.

4

When putting the fire out:

- When putting a campfire out, drown it with water. Stir the fire with water and dirt until all the ashes are cold to the touch.
- Before leaving the area double check the camp fire to ensure it is out cold.

References: <http://www.safekids.org>, *Make Camping a Safe Summer Excursion*
www.smokeybearstore.com/smokey_bear_campfire_safety.htm,